

NEWS YOU CAN USE!

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MIGRATION COMPLETE!

The success story of the year for OCIO is the completion of the migration from Novell to Microsoft. The project found it's share of technical hurdles and at each turn of events we found a way to make our network conversion a good one. We tried to accomplish this with minimal impact to you - our customers.

Why migrate? This is a great question! First, we had a Departmental requirement to meet. Second, we wanted to provide better services and ease of use of applications that are used throughout ARS and government. The conversion to Microsoft Office was also accomplished during this migration. Applications

were also migrated, and servers and network hardware were upgraded or replaced.

We also migrated our email systems. With this new email we implemented Message Screen (see article on page 2) which captures and quarantines suspicious and threatening email attachments.

We implemented new security permissions and converted our users to new login credentials with tighter security controls. All of these systems required unique and thorough testing to minimize the impact on all business processes.

It was an exhausting year



Migration complete - On to new PC installations!

but it gave us all in OCIO a great sense of accomplishment and we value all the input and patience from our customers in ARS and beyond. As we strive in the coming new year to build on this success we invite you to contact us with any problems you may have encountered. We sincerely want to help you do your job better!

PC INSTALL PROJECT

As we start this new year, we are already implementing a project called "New PC Installs." If you have an older PC, we have already been in contact with you about converting it to one of our newly purchased PCs. We are pushing a pre-

configured standard image with all software required on it. A user information sheet will be provided to you so that you can specifically list in detail the items that you have on your old PC. An Installation technician will stop by and work

with you if you have any questions. After installation a Quality Assurance technician will stop by to review the work completed and to make sure that things are working as expected. A user name and temporary password sheet will also be left.

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THE “FUN AND FAR SIDE” OF OCIO



OCIO Dr. Melinda McClanahan and her husband Robert Porter enjoy our Holiday celebration.



CTSB Michael Witles shows off his “Sense of Style” for our Fall festivities.



CTSB Gary Felder and ARSCTO Doug Page enjoy some “double image” fun at the same event.

NOTICE FROM U.S. COMPUTER EMERGENCY READINESS TEAM

US-CERT Federal Information Notice, FIN-0-331-01, dated November 27, 2007 was sent out to us from the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team.

This notification details the sophisticated attempts to compromise government networks and systems. The sophisticated level

“The sophisticated level and scope of these cyber security incidents indicate that they are coordinated and targeted at federal systems”.

and scope of these cyber security incidents indicate they are coordinated and targeted at federal systems. OCIO has been diligently working to fight these incidents by implementing the Message Screen attachment policy and not permitting in bound attachments that could contain these types of serious threats. In October 2007 Message Screen captured 65 virus incidents directly related to attachments. The recommendations set forth in this notification include the following basic

measurements when working with email:

- Do not trust unsolicited email.
- Treat all email attachments with caution.
- Do not click links in unsolicited email messages.
- Install anti-virus software and keep the virus signature up to date.
- Turn off the option to automatically download attachments.
- Block executable and unknown file types at the e-mail gateway.
- Configure you e-mail for security
- Employ the use of a spam filter

The primary source of infection has been through Trojan e-mails; however, there is also evidence of compromised websites redirecting users to malicious sites without users knowledge.

The filter policies we implement attempt to balance usability with system security. In the formulation of policies, consideration is given to the following factors:

- Is the file type for authorized use?
- What is the risk presented by this type of file?
- Is this file type known to be actively exploited by suspicious organizations or individuals?

File types such as .zip, .exe, .bat, .mps, .video files and others are known to be the types exploited by threatening parties and are either deleted, quarantined, or parked.

If you have any questions, contact CTSB.

MESSAGE SCREEN

Not receiving some of your email? Don't forget to access your Message Screen User Quarantine regularly by going to the following link ...

[https://
messagescreen1.ars.usda.gov/
user/index.php](https://messagescreen1.ars.usda.gov/user/index.php)

At the login screen:

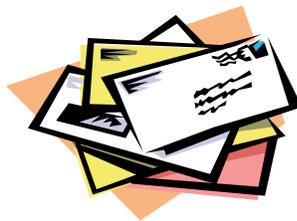
Enter your full email address, i.e., john.doe@ars.usda.gov

Enter your network password

Click Login

After a successful login your quarantine area will appear.

Take a moment to do a general review of the messages listed. It may be easiest to verify that everything visible is a spam message,



Helping you manage email!

and then single out exceptions that are not.

If a message is NOT spam,

release it for delivery (to your inbox) by clicking the Release icon . The message now will turn green.

It is also possible to 'Release and

Trust Sender', which will both re-lease the message and add the sender to the Trusted Senders list so that messages from this sender will not be quarantined again.

When all messages have been highlighted as desired, click the 'Commit' button at the bottom of the screen to process all the messages.

CTSB STATS

- This year CTSB (Help Desk) serviced and closed 10,009 calls?
- 91% of all inbound email was Spam (15 million messages in November 2006 !)

ADOBE READER VERSION 8

If you are using the new e-Forms software it will require Adobe Reader versions 8. Individuals will need to purchase upgrades for Adobe Professional. We are currently working on an upgrade to the e-Forms software which includes ad-

ditional security to the stored data and the ability to use electronic signature. The project will be done in phases with the first phase deployment planned for January 2008. Based on information from the contractor, we strongly recommend users migrate to Adobe 8, as users will encounter performance issues with Adobe 7. We are giving you

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this heads up so you can start to prepare now. Remember, you can not have multiple versions of Adobe on your machine.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these issues, please forward them to aris@ars.usda.gov with a subject of e-forms.

If you need assistance upgrading to Adobe Reader version 8 please contact helpdesk@ars.usda.gov

USDA PASSWORD POLICY CHANGE

In accordance with a memo from OCIO Charles R. Christopherson, dated December 14, 2007 we will be implementing a new password policy. In order to ensure compliance with a forthcoming Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC) requirement, all agencies in the near future will have to be in compliance. The following changes will be made for all user accounts:

- Sixty days age limit on passwords.
- One day minimum age limit.
- Passwords will have twelve or more characters in length.
- Alpha, numeric, and special character combinations will be required.
- No dictionary words.
- A lock out will occur after five failed login attempts.
- A history of 24 preciously used passwords.

Further explanation will be provided by OCIO in a future email. Be prepared - you will have to change your password to meet these new requirements in the future!

USDA ARS OCIO PRESENTS

IT Energy Awareness Training was given January 14, 2008. Some highlights are on Sharepoint at <https://arsnet.usda.gov/sites/AFM/FD/EA/Shared%20Documents/Electronics%20Stewardship/electronics%20stewardship-ARS%2001-14-2007.ppt>. Did you know that a PC with a monitor and printer uses 88 watts of electricity when left on weeknights/weekends for a total of about \$70.29 per year per PC? Multiply that times 721 PCs at GWCC for a grand total of \$50,679 per year? Please turn them off if you are not using VPN access!

Helpful Hints—

- Always log off your computer when you are leaving your desk.
- Never leave your password where someone can find it like under your keyboard.
- Review the energy guidelines and turn off your computer, monitor and printers at the end of the day unless you are a VPN user.
- Make sure your computer name matches your cubicle location so that we can find you when making a service call. If you have moved recently your computer name needs to match your location!

OMAR NEWS -

The Records Management Team successfully completed and received NARA approval for the NASS Consolidated Records Schedule. In addition the ARIS Record Schedule is almost ready for submission to NARA and work has started on scheduling the GRIN System. OMAR hopes to keep the momentum going despite the retirement of our Records Management Officer, Steve Pollard coming up on February 1, 2008.

The Issuance Review System is almost ready for Prime Time with a REE wide pilot test scheduled for mid January 2008. This has been a long arduous journey but we can see light at the end of the tunnel!

The NFC Security Team has had another stellar year, passing the A123 security compliance testing, setting up for MITS, and being on the new Travel System Implementation Team.

Contact Michele Koff for further information at 301 504-1049

More Useful Information !

Are you having trouble moving or copying files?

When files are clicked and dragged using the left mouse button results can vary from creating a shortcut to moving or copying depending on the type of file it is and where it is being taken. The rules for using the left mouse button are listed below.

- Clicking and dragging files on the same drive moves the files unless the files is an executable file and then this would create a shortcut.
- Clicking and dragging files between different drives copies the files.
- Control Click and Drag always copies.
- Shift Click and Drag always moves.
- Clicking and dragging between the Desktop to the C: drive or H: drive is a move. This is because technically, the Desktop is merely a sub-directory on the drive.

Top Tip to Share—You can access your email by using <https://mail.ars.usda.gov> in your Internet browser and then type in your user name when prompted:

For domain name firstname.lastname

And then use your password that you normally log in with at your office PC.

WEB BRANCH INFORMATION -

Presentations from Web Week 2006 are now available. The full URL is: <https://arsnet.usda.gov/sites/OCIO/WB/webbies/Web%20Week%202006/default.aspx>

If you have any questions or articles you would like to see OCIO address in future electronic information links please address them to -

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Additional contributors to this electronic informational resource are members of the CTSB Helpdesk staff. The editor would like to thank everyone involved in helping put this together.

Quote for the Day—"Energy and persistence alter all things" — Benjamin Franklin

Did you know...?

- The ARS website has 11K of pages and we averaged over 20,000 visitors to the ARS web site daily?
- The average web site visit lasts 8 minutes and Tuesday is the most heavily trafficked day?
- AFM hosts about 11,000 pages?